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By Mr. T O W N,

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Sex boras somno, totidem des legibus æquis ;

Quatuor orabis, des epulisque duas.

Quod superest, ultrò sacris largire Camænis. Co. LITT.

To Mr. T O W N.

S I R !

Middle Temple.



IF we look into the several inns of court, the profest students of the law compose a very numerous body : but if we afterwards turn our eyes on those few, who are employed in exercising their talents in *Westminster-Hall*, this prodigious army of lawyers shrinks to a very thin and inconsiderable corps. Thousands, it seems, are disgusted with the unpleasing dryness of the study, as it is now managed, and conceive an unconquerable aversion to the white

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leaves and the old black letter. This early dislike to legal enquiries certainly proceeds from the fatal mistakes in the plan of study hitherto marked out. According to all systems now extant, it is absolutely impossible to be at once a lawyer and a fine gentleman. Seeing with concern the many evils arising from these erroneous principles, I have at length devised a method to remedy all these inconveniences; a method, now very successfully practised by several young gentlemen. Wherefore I must beg leave to submit my thoughts to the public by means of your paper, and to chalk out the outlines of a treatise, now ready for the press, intitled *The Complete Barrister, or, a New Institute of the Laws of England*.

My Lord *Coke* prescribes to our student to follow the advice given in the ancient verses, prefixed to this letter, for the good spending of the day. "Six hours to sleep, six to the study of the law, four to prayer, two to meals, and the rest to the Muses." But what an absurd and unfashionable distribution of the four and twenty hours! I will venture a thousand pounds to a shilling, that not one student in the kingdom divides his time in this manner. Here is not a single word of *Vauxhall*, *Ranelagh*, the theatres, or other public diversions; not to mention that nobody but a methodist would ever think of praying four hours, and that it would be impossible, though we were content with snapping up a chop every day at *Betty's*, to dispatch even dinner in two. How then shall we reconcile these precepts, scarce practicable by a hermit, to the life of a young gentleman who keeps the best company? Or how can these rules for severe application be made consistent with the practice of those, who divide their whole time between eating, drinking, sleeping, and amusements? Well knowing that the
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volatile dispositions of the young gentlemen of the present age can never submit the ordering of their lives to any prescribed rules, I have endeavoured to square my precepts to their lives; and have so contrived the matter, that amidst the keenest pursuit of their pleasures, they shall be engaged in the most improving course of the law.

As laws are chiefly nothing else but rules of action, what can be more cruel and absurd, than to coop up a brisk young man to learn in his chambers, what he can so much better teach himself by going abroad into the world? I propose to dose gentlemen with study, as Dr. *Rock* does with physic, to be taken at home or abroad without loss of time or hindrance of business. This, I am convinced, is not only the best method, but also the only scheme which several inhabitants of the inns of court would ever follow. I shall not at present forestall the contents of my treatise by presenting you with a dry abstract of it, but rather endeavour to give you an idea of the spirit and manner in which it is written, by delineating the plan diligently pursued by one of my favourite pupils: and I cannot but congratulate the bar, that so many young men, instead of blinding their eyes and bewildering their understandings with *Coke*, *Plowden*, *Salkeld*, &c. have sense enough to follow the same course of study.

TOM RIOT, the principal ornament of my class of students, was sent to the *Temple*, not with any intention that he should become a great lawyer, but merely because, for a few years, his father did not know how to dispose of him otherwise: but so unwearied has been his application to the new method, that his father and the rest of his friends will, I doubt not, be surprized at his wonderful proficiency. As
nothing

nothing is of more consequence to those gentlemen, who intend to harangue at the bar, than the acquiring a ready elocution, and an easy habit of delivering their thoughts in public, to this I paid particular attention. For this purpose, I advised him to a diligent attendance on the theatres, and I assure you, Mr. TOWN, he never fails to take notes at a new play, and seldom or never misses appearing at one house or the other in the green boxes. He has also gathered many beautiful flowers of rhetorick, unblown upon by all other orators ancient or modern, from the *Robin Hood Society*; and at the same place he has collected the strongest arguments on every subject, and habituated himself to modes of reasoning never hitherto introduced into courts of justice. But what has been of more than ordinary service to him, and is particularly recommended by Lord *Coke* himself, who calls "conference the life of study," is his so frequent attendance at *George's* and the other coffee-houses about the *Temple*, where every student has so many opportunities of benefiting himself by daily conversation with counsellors, attornies, clerks to attornies, and other sages of the law.

THE law is intended to take cognisance of all our actions, wherefore my pupil, who is fond of exerting his faculties in polite life, has already digested almost all the grand leading points of the law into a journal of his transactions, which I shall lay before my readers at large in my treatise, as the best method for a common-place-book. Thus for instance, having been frequently employed, after leaving the *Shakespeare*, in what is called *beating the rounds*, it has happened to him to be taken into custody by the magistrate of the night, and carried the next morning before a justice, by which means he has attained as full a knowledge of certain parts of the duty of a constable and justice of peace, as could be collected from *Dalton*, *Blackerby*, or *Burn*. Certain impertinences of his taylor and other tradesmen have given him a very clear notion of the laws of arrest, and been of as much

much service to him as the best treatises on bail and main-prize. Besides which, the several sums of money which he has taken up at different times payable on his father's death, have opened to him some difficult points in conveyancing, by teaching him the nature of bonds, deeds, &c. and have at the same time shewn him what Lord *Coke* calls, "the amiable and admirable secrets of the common law," by unravelling to him the intricate doctrines of reversion and remainder, as well as the general nature of estates. Thus he is continually improving, and whenever he should happen to commit a rape or a genteel murder, it will serve him for matter of instruction as well as any history of the pleas of the crown, and give him an insight into the nature of the practice and extent of the jurisdiction of our courts of justice.

By this plan of study no time is lost; so that while other students are idling away their vacation in the country, my pupil is daily improving there. As he is a member of the association, he is very conversant in all the laws enacted for the preservation of the game; and he picks up all the learning of the circuit by dancing at the Balls at the assizes. As his father has a place, he is employed in canvassing for votes at the time of an election, which instructs him in all the points of law touching those matters. He was principally concerned in discovering the *Customary Tenants*, that new species of freeholders unknown to *Littleton*, *Coke*, and all the lawyers of antiquity: and he is so intimately acquainted with all the doctrine contained in the several clauses of the bribery act, that I propose publishing in the body of my treatise *Les Readings Del Mon Seignior RIOT Sur L'Estatute de 2 Geo. 2. &c.*

By this time, Mr. Town, you must perceive that the ground of my scheme is in short no more than this, *viz.* that the student should regard his life as a kind of commentary on the law, as it is recommended to the clergy to become examples of the doctrine they teach. Or to bring my illustration more home to these gentlemen, let them learn the law by being occasionally interested in different parts of it,

as they become in some measure doctors of physic from frequent need of it, and can cure themselves in certain cases as well as *Rock* himself. Instead of poring over books, a gentleman need only observe, how far the law and his actions tally with each other; and as it is said by Lord *Coke*, "that the knowledge of the law is like a deep well, out of which each man draweth according to the strength of his understanding," so in pursuance of my plan, the student will improve according to the eagerness with which he engages in his pleasures: and this, no doubt, was intended by Lord *Coke*, as it is the most obvious interpretation of his words, when he concludes the comparison by saying, that "when the professor of the law can dive into the depth, it is *delightful, easy, and without any heavy burthen*, so long as he keep himself in his own proper element."

WHAT plan, Mr. TOWN, can be more *delightful, easy, and without any heavy burthen* than Institutes of this nature? I have indeed often looked with concern upon those unhappy gentlemen who have impaired their health by the old method of study, and considered them as martyrs to huge volumes of reports and statutes at large: my pupils will be in no danger of these misfortunes. It is recorded of an eminent counsellor of the *North* family, who being one of the ablest practitioners at the bar, was so overloaded with business, that sometimes chusing to retire awhile from hurry and perplexity, he would say to his clerk "Tell the people I do not practise this term." This proper relaxation I always recommend to my pupils, and have some reason to think they are prudent enough to embrace it; for as I am acquainted with several students on the new plan, and do not remember to have seen them doing any business in the courts for some time. I suppose they had given notice to their clerks "to tell the people that they did not practise in those terms." *I am, sir, your humble servant,*

W

IGNORAMUS.

The Letter signed J. C. has been received, and shall be duly regarded.